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Scribes -

Eleanor Allen
Jean Armstrong
Gayle Attaway
Charlotte Battle
Carolyn Blakely
Doris Chitwood
Frances Drew
Jan Gay
Libby Glenn
Madge Hill
Doranne Jennings
Suzanne McCowen
Jody Mann
Sally Rogers
Shelia Rubel
Marilyn Shapiro
Sharon Smith
Peggy Stiles
Jean Thrasher
Sara Thurston
Jean Tolbert
Claine Wood

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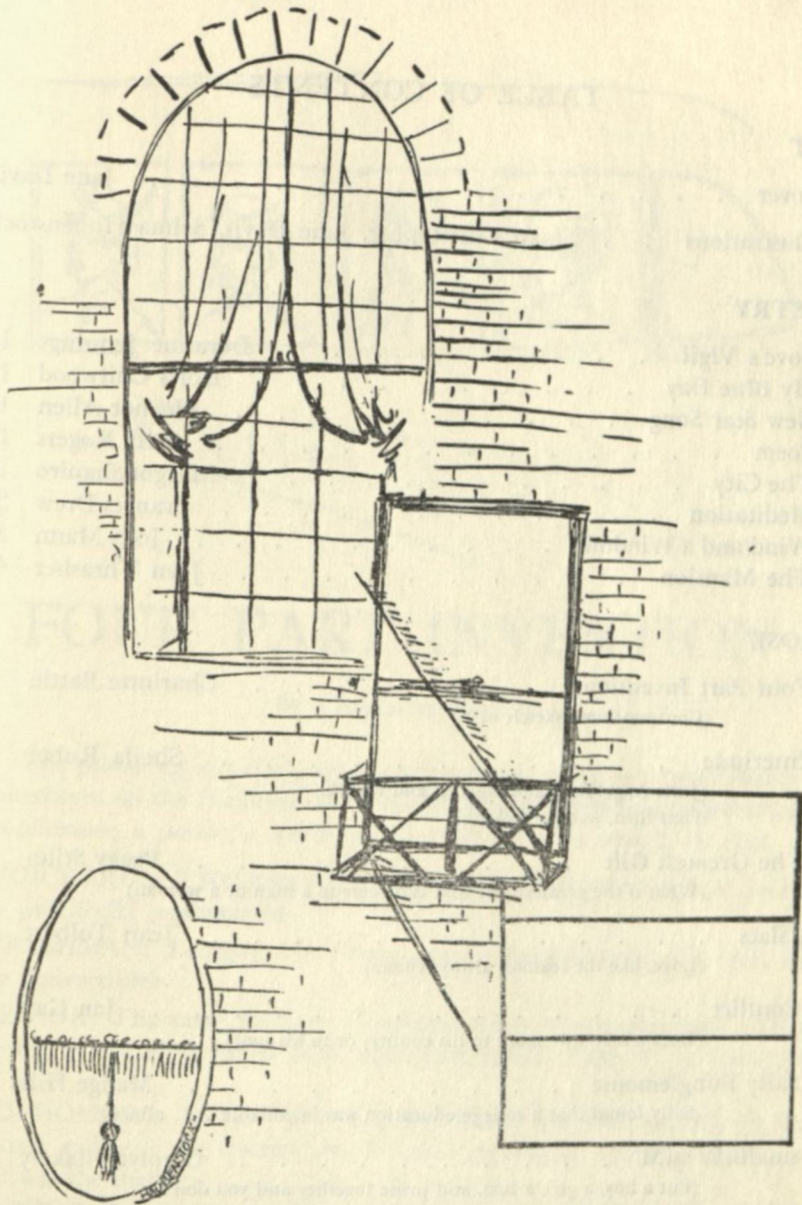
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This is the Scribes' issue of the Wesleyan. And who are the Scribes? They are the wearers of the coveted "mingled yarn", the symbol of creativity, of imagination, and of inspiration. They are the would-be novelists, poets, and playwrights of our time. They are the students who groan long hours over uncooperative typewriters, heap trash cans high with cast-off masterpieces, and finally end up with "the most horrible thing I've ever written."

The Scribes Society is a continuation of the Wesleyan Writers Club, formed in 1920 by fourteen young hopefuls interested in writing. The name was later changed to Scribes and Pharisees, and finally, in 1931, became simply the Scribes. But the purpose of the club has stayed the same—to encourage attempts at creativeness that may someday grow into greatness.

Every year the Scribes are responsible for putting out the spring issue of the Wesleyan. This year the central theme is: Windows.

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WESLEYAN COLLEGE

FOUR PART INVENTION

By CHARLOTTE BATTLE

The following is a likely transcription of simultaneous conversations overheard on the Wesleyan bus. The participants include a freshman, a sophomore, a junior, a senior, and a voice from the rear of the bus.

VOICE FROM THE REAR: Do you mind lowering the window, please? I'm practically asphyxiated.

FRESHMAN: Tonight? But I have a term paper to write. Oh, well, has he a convertible?

SENIOR: The same aesthetic principles apply to contemporary poetry. Absolutely worthless unless it is incomprehensible. Take T. S. Eliot, *per se* . . .

SOPHOMORE: So we put a mop handle in her bed, see. Under the mattress and over the springs, see. It was a panic! She couldn't figure out what was the matter.

JUNIOR: I feel that anything detrimental to one's character is highly immoral.

FRESHMAN: Of course I talk to boys in the drugstore. How else can you meet them? High School boys are more mature than people realize.

VOICE FROM THE REAR: Will you please let the window down?

SENIOR: If you haven't developed a philosophy of life by now, then I regard your college years utterly and unequivocally wasted. Mine? Oh, it's rather what you would call an entrancing fusion of Nietzsche, Plato, and Pogo.

SOPHOMORE: You know you'll get restricted for using fireworks— and besides, she looks deathly in chartreuse!

JUNIOR: It's living in sin, that's what it is.

FRESHMAN: I told him I'd been pinned five times already, but he said "Take it anyway baby, it looks better on you than me."

SENIOR: The fate of fates—to live a conventional life.

SOPHOMORE: What's wrong with putting cold cream on them?

FRESHMAN: I don't know why, but he insisted and insisted and insisted that he didn't want to dance. He wanted to watch television.

VOICE FROM THE REAR: The window—please!

JUNIOR: I've tried to cultivate an open mind. But there comes a time when even I blush.

SENIOR: The degenerates of modern society are certainly of a more irrepressible nature than ever before in the history of civilization.

SOPHOMORE: It's easy, see. All you got to do is get a balloon and fill it up with hot water . . .

JUNIOR: It really is sad that more people don't realize the pitfalls of . . .

FRESHMAN: He said "You'll have to come up and see my etchings sometime." And I said, "Oh, really, Phillip? I didn't know you drew!"

VOICE FROM THE REAR: Are you going to let the window down or aren't you?

SENIOR: Wagner is passe, my dear. Unless you like Bartok, you are better off not to mention music.

SOPHOMORE: I don't care how many call-downs you get. It's worth it.

FRESHMAN: It was sweet of him, wasn't it? A whole diamond and all for me.

JUNIOR: Such nobility . . . such strength of character.

VOICE FROM THE REAR: For pete's sake, somebody let down a window, quick!

(The individual conversations suddenly converge on this one subject.)

SENIOR: The humidity in Macon at this time of year is entirely too high to warrant such action.

FRESHMAN: It'll blow my hair. And I have a date tonight!

SOPHOMORE: Are you trying to pull a prank on us? I'm on to you, see. I know about the paper mill.

(There is a thud at the rear of the bus.)

SENIOR: *(Upon investigation)* She fainted. How strange. The carbon dioxide element in this air is hardly sufficient to . . .

SOPHOMORE: Ah-h-h, she's just playing 'possum.

JUNIOR: Such a hypocritical attitude.

FRESHMAN: Oh, she's probably making a play for that cute boy on the corner. Ready for the big rescue. I know her kind.

SENIOR: The girl fainted, I tell you! Stifled by the superfluous character of most of these conversations, I suppose.

JUNIOR: Pity.

SOPHOMORE: Huh!

FRESHMAN: Tish.

(And the bus drove on down Forsyth Road.)

INTERLUDE

By SHEILA RUBEL

It was raining the evening Julie Angel walked down 34th street. She was in a hurry to get to the B.M.T. subway. The streets were noisy with taxi horns, and screeching truck brakes. Twilight seeped through the skyscrapers, down to the streets below. The street lamps flashed on as Julie reached the subway entrance.

She bought a New York Post and smiled brightly at the old man, from whom she had been buying newspapers for years. The air smelled fresh and clean from the rain, but as she slowly descended the subway steps amid the throng of the 5:30 rush hour crowd, the air became damp and humid.

The stone pavement underground was spotted with rain water from umbrellas and dirty galoshes. The smell of hot dogs from the Nedick Orange Juice stands mingled with the luscious odor of fresh pop corn, and chocolate peanut brittle, emanating from the Barton's candy counter.

Above the chattering of the rush hour crowd, the newspaper boys screaming the latest headlines, and the constant ringing of the turnstiles, the subway's roar could be heard from the lower level.

Julie passed through the arcade of stores, hurrying by the underground section of Gimbel's Department Store. The neon light over the entrance to Gimbel's flickered on and off . . . "Subway Entrance". Julie's eye caught the sign and automatically traveled to the window display at Gimbel's. She stopped suddenly.

There was a red plaid arm chair in the window, almost exactly like the one she had at home. It was the first piece she had bought when she furnished her own apartment, some years before. She looked closely to see if the price was on it. It wasn't. But the overstuffed arm chair gave her a funny feeling. As a matter of fact the entire window display struck her as somehow . . . personal. It was almost as if she were looking at her own living room encased by glass.

She tilted her head a bit, and looked straight ahead. Julie always tilted her head when she was thinking. It was part of the technique they had taught her at the Fox Drama School on 58th St. That was ten years ago. Now she did it from force of habit. There were a lot of things she did now, from force of habit.

Her eyes hardened and her mouth set tight. Ten years ago she was fresh out of college, green to life in the "Big Town" . . . but Julie learned fast. It wasn't long before she knew the right thing to say at the right time, and the right thing to do when the occasion warranted action. Fortified with a determination never to accept defeat, no matter what the price, Julie Angel fought her way through every obstacle that the show world had to offer. Opportunity after opportunity came her way because she directed their path right to her own door. She was just one of those who knew how to make their own fate. Nothing was ever to stand in her way, and nothing

ever did . . . except once . . . She would never wipe out the remembrance of that "once" either.

She looked at the red arm chair, seeing it as she had seen it that day . . . five, six years ago . . . she couldn't remember exactly. She did remember him seated there, telling her that he would never marry her; telling her she was too callous, self-centered and egotistical to ever find room in her heart for anyone except herself; and that had been the one moment in her life, the one time when she thought she could have given herself completely for another's benefit . . . the one man she'd ever wanted . . . and lost. Her selfishness had won out then . . . just as it always did . . . as it did yesterday.

She had always known what she wanted—modelling, theatre, television—he had all that now. She still wanted it. It was a part of her. But always there was his memory . . . the shadow of her one defeat, and there was no room for defeat in Julie Angel's philosophy. What she couldn't control he destroyed . . . but she couldn't eradicate this . . . not Martin Leeds, the man who had walked out on Julie Angel so many years ago, the man who wanted a wife, and not a painted mannikin.

Julie looked at the reflection of herself in the window. Yes, that's what she was . . . a painted mannikin, belonging inside that window. She knew it and she didn't care. She'd built that glass around herself. She'd had to, to keep out the hurt—and it did hurt. It always hurts to be faced by defeat. Now that she had built that glass she knew she could never be hurt again. Nothing would ever touch her. Her life would remain spotless. She would live in a showcase of unbreakable glass. Nothing would ever break through to hurt her or anything belonging to her. No one would ever spill ashes on her Chinese rug. No one would ever lie on her velvety green couch and stain the arm with hair oil . . . no one would trespass, because she didn't want them, and most of all because she didn't need them—now. And she never would again—if she had to fight like a tiger to keep anyone from penetrating that glass wall. That glass had almost been shattered yesterday . . . almost . . . almost. She scratched the back of her neck and leaned against the window . . . yesterday . . . yesterday . . . the word hummed in her thoughts. She could see it so clearly . . . so vividly . . . she remembered now the telephone was ringing in her three-room apartment when she put the key in the lock yesterday.

"Hello?" she said, slipping out of her blue worsted coat and throwing it on the mahogany chair near the telephone table. She glanced at her grey satin drapes covering her two bay windows near the terrace and made a mental note to have them dry cleaned before summer set in.

The voice at the other end spoke smoothly and calmly. Julie's face whitened ever so slightly. She dropped into the mahogany chair, sitting on her coat.

"What . . . what do YOU want?" she asked barely audible to herself, her voice grating on her own ears.

"I want to see you," a man's voice said.

"Do you?" Julie asked bitterly.

"Yes," he replied, very business like. "Right away . . . tonight."

"I . . . I have an appointment tonight."

"Break it."

"I . . . I can't. It's . . . about a new part . . . I . . . I have to see some people, . . . we . . ."

"Break it," he insisted.

"No," returned Julie sharply.

"I'll be there in half an hour, Julie. I want you to be there." The receiver clicked.

"Hello . . . hello? . . ." Julie rose and pressed the two black buttons on the phone and waited . . . she finally replaced the receiver.

Forty-five minutes later, Martin Leeds stood in the doorway of Julie Angel's apartment.

He was tall and well-built, bordering on six feet. He had deep blue eyes that seemed to dance when he smiled. He was dressed in khaki. Julie looked at his bars.

"So, it's Captain Leeds now, isn't it?" she said.

"How are you, Julie?" He smiled down at her.

"I'm well, thank you."

They looked at one another a long moment.

"Aren't you going to ask me in?"

"Of course, come in."

"Thank you."

"Have a seat."

"My favorite?"

"It's still here."

He sat down in the red arm chair and lit a cigarette. There was another long silence.

"How have you been, Marty?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, getting along, still with the U.S.O."

"Yes, I know," Julie paused uncomfortably. Her voice was hoarse. "How do you like it?"

"I've always liked it. It's a great organization and they're doing an important job."

"Er, let me get you an ash tray." She quickly moved to the fireplace and slid her hand over the marble mantelpiece to get the silver plated horse shaped ash tray.

"Here you are," she handed it to him.

"Oh, I'm sorry," he apologized. "I'm afraid I've dropped some ashes on the rug."

"Oh, that's all right."

"I'll scoop them up."

"No, no, don't bother. It makes no difference."

"Terrible habit of mine."

"Yes, I know." Julie turned to the windows, moving aside the drapes, she looked out across Riverside Drive. There were some children playing ball near Grant's Tomb.

"Julie?"

"Yes?" she said, without turning.

"I suppose you know why I've come."

"Yes I do." She turned around to face him squarely. "You're wasting your time. My answer is irrevocably no."

"I see."

"No, you don't see, but we'll let it go at that." Julie gazed out the window. Martin Leeds moved toward her.

"You won't sacrifice one ounce of your precious security will you?" he said.

"That's right—I won't." Her voice was strained and she clutched the drapes with her hand.

"I can't understand how anyone could take such an attitude." He moved to the carved end table to crush his cigarette.

Julie turned around violently.

"There's nothing to understand. I don't have to do anything for anybody." She gestured with her hands. "I-I don't owe anything to anyone. No one ever did anything for me. Everything I ever got, I got by myself. No favors were ever handed to me, and I'm not going out of my way for anyone else. . . ." Julie took a deep breath. "But I don't expect you to understand that, Marty. You've never had to fight for anything the way I have."

"Don't you think I understand? Don't you think I know what you've been through? Sure, it hasn't been easy, but nothing ever is—for any of us, Julie."

"So, what?" she asked dully.

"So, there comes a time when you forget about yourself, a time when you sacrifice your own ambitions long enough to do someone else a good turn—to do something for your country."

"Oh, don't flash that patriotism on me, Marty." Julie moved to the television cadenza impatiently, rubbing her hands across the top, fingerprinting the shiny surface. "It doesn't hold any water with me."

"Julie, the U.S.O. contacted you three weeks ago about an overseas tour. The least you could have done was to have the decency to answer them one way or the other."

"I told them if I was interested, I'd let them know." She sat down on the couch, crossed her legs and folded her arms across her chest.

"What do you mean 'IF' you're interested? What do you think you're doing—playing cat and mouse?" He leaned down, his face peering down angrily into her.

She turned her head away and got up quickly.

"Look, Marty, let's get one thing straight. I'm not giving up a fat pay check and a weekly television spot to go out and entertain a lot of kids who think theatre is a shapely pair of gams and a fan dance. I'm not giving up. . . ."

"They're giving up their lives for you."

"They're giving up their lives. They're giving up their lives . . . that's all you hear, day in and day out. I know it, Marty. I know what they're

sacrificing. But it can't be helped. It's just one of those things—it's war. Does that mean you have to break up your own life, throw away everything you ever worked for, discard the little bit you've had to sweat blood to get? There are plenty of big names to supply the entertainment. Let THEM do it. They can afford it. You have to look out for yourself in this world, believe me, I know that. If YOU don't, no one else will."

"And patriotism, wars, death, self sacrifice and self denial . . . words . . . that means nothing to you?"

"Oh!" Julie stamped her foot, "can't you shut up and leave me alone?"

"Is that all you have to say?" he asked quietly.

"Yes!" Julie dug her black spiked heel into her Chinese rug.

"All right, then," he agreed softly. "It's your life, Julie. I shouldn't have come here. I see now it was a mistake."

"Marty, can't you try to see my side of this thing—just for a minute? I'm not always on the wrong side of the fence, you know. If you had any real idea of how long it's taken me to get this show . . . do you know how many faces I've had to slap . . . how many people I've had to cow-tow to? I have had to fight my way for everything I get . . . I'm tired of fighting—tired—I'm not throwing it all away, only to have to start all over again from the beginning."

"A few million boys are going to have to start all over again from the beginning."

"I'm not interested in a few million boys. This is me—Julie Angel. I come first in my book."

Marty stared at her hard for a moment. She caught his eye and looked away. Finally she said.

"If that's all you came for, Marty, I . . ."

"No," he interrupted, "It's not all I came for, but it doesn't matter . . . now, Julie."

He rose heavily, his hands balled in his pockets. Julie didn't see that. "It just doesn't matter." He walked toward the door. Julie followed him quickly.

"What do you mean, it doesn't matter?"

"Nothing," he replied, turning away from her.

Julie looked at him with uncertainty, afraid to speak, afraid not to speak. An auburn curl fell on her forehead.

"What do you mean, Marty?"

"Nothing," he repeated. "Goodbye."

He opened the door. Julie threw herself in front of him.

"No, wait, please!"

"It's getting late, Julie."

"Is it . . . about us?"

He didn't answer her.

"Is it, Marty?" she repeated, her voice pleading, her eyes moist.

"Suppose it is," he sighed.

"Well?" she looked searchingly into his face, "What is it?"

"It's too late now, Julie."

"Too late for what?"

"Julie, please let me by. You've got a previous engagement, I don't want to keep you."

"Marty, listen to me—please."

"Alright," he said, tiredly. "What?"

"Five years ago you walked out on me—I let you go."

"You couldn't have stopped me, Julie."

"I know. But I can't let you walk out again."

"I have to, Julie."

"All right. You were right the last time—I admit it. I was selfish, egotistical . . ."

"And you still are," he remarked quietly.

"No, no, you're wrong. You don't know what I'm trying to tell you?"

He looked down at her as one might look at a child.

"You love me, is that it?"

Julie opened her mouth in awe. She whispered. "You know."

"It's obvious, Julie."

"Then . . . then. . ." she left off unfinished, her thoughts a jumble of confusion.

"What do you expect me to do? You haven't changed one iota. You're the same Julie Angel, who stood here five years ago making rash promises to stop thinking of herself all the time, to . . ."

"I tried, Marty. Honestly. I've paid by my selfishness. I paid by losing you."

"Julie, I came here tonight, partly because of the U.S.O. tour and partly to see if you'd matured any, to see if maybe there was some slight chance of happiness for the both of us. But there isn't." He smiled down at her bewildered face. "Some people just aren't meant for happiness, are they, Julie?" He spoke kindly.

"Marty," she said breathlessly, "I'll change. I promise I will this time. I'll have to. I can't get along without you." She put her hands on his arms and looked up at him. "Do I have to crawl?"

He looked at her face—streaming with tears. His heart ached for one last chance—one more try. At last he said, "Julie, I'm going overseas in charge of the U.S.O. tour. Marry me and . . ."

"Marry you?" she laughed eagerly. "Oh, yes, Marty, yes."

"And come overseas with me on the tour."

Julie's hands dropped slowly. The expression on her face hardened and her eyes grew cool. She moved back a step or two.

"I can't," she said slowly.

Martin Leeds looked at Julie Angel for a long moment.

"Goodbye, Julie."

He walked out, closed the door behind him and left her standing there alone.

* * *

Julie Angel turned as someone brushed by her in the subway station. She was still staring at the arm chair in Gimbel's window. The watchman

locked the doors to the store and the sign, "Subway Entrance" flickered on and off for the last time that evening.

Julie knew as she stared at the display that it WAS her living room, surrounded by glass and she was a painted mannikin encased by a self-made glass wall.

No one would ever trespass . . . no one would ever again shatter that glass . . . no one would ever spill ashes on her Chinese rug . . . "no ashes on the rug," no hair oil on the couch, no living in the apartment—just Julie, a fat pay check, and her television spot . . . alone.

His words kept repeating themselves in her mind.

"Some people just aren't meant for happiness, are they, Julie?"

Abruptly she turned her back, clicking her heels, as she dug into her alligator purse for ten cents subway fare.

LOVE'S VIGIL

DORANNE JENNINGS

*Outside my window flew a bird
And to my waiting heart it sang,
"Dream on and hope."*

*The flowers blossoming below
Nodding their heads together said,
"Your love is true."*

*Still by my window silently
I sat as falling leaves whispered,
"Love will not die."*

*White frost covered the window pane
And snowflakes murmured as they fell,
"He will come soon."*

*Spring and the birds have come again
And my glad heart rejoicing sings,
"My love has come."*

MY BLUE DAY

DORIS CHITWOOD

*The smooth stars of a
 Viennese waltz drift
 carelessly out of the open window
 A dying soul clings longing
 to a few soft memories
 Thoughts build up one on
 the other forming a
 mood of sadness within
 Here am I closed within
 these four small walls,
 yet I am not here at all—*

*For my soul has drifted
 across the rain—
 soaked meadow outside
 A heart unwanted—
 A soul depressed within
 on this blue day.*

NEW STAR SONG

ELEANOR ALLEN

*Glitter
 Twinkling and black velvety
 No mellow moon song of old.
 Only live stars.
 Sensations and sights an eyefull
 And stars and stars a skyfull
 The green lights blow brighter
 Bearing the light laughter higher
 While the twin steeples weave and lean close together
 Tolling the tears down, down in low moans
 Sensations and sights an eyefull
 And stars and stars a skyfull
 Nearer, the trees, branches whispering
 Familiar and dear, yet no longer protecting
 There with peach, but no longer needed
 For out there beyond them, out of my window
 I see a new world
 Waiting.*

The Greatest Gift

By PEGGY STILES

The death of a loved one is so final. It leaves nothing but a memory—poignant to many; to me, happy. As I grow older, my thoughts dwell more in the past. It is better that way, for the glorious years of my life have long since moved into the realm of memory.

I remember the first time John came to call. Eighteen I was and so particular! I had spent an hour before the mirror combing and recombining my hair, pinching my cheeks, and biting my lips to make them red. Anxiously I peered out the front window. At last I saw him. Quickly I stepped back from the window. What if he had seen me!

We sat in the parlor that evening with my mother and father. I felt so ill at ease. Time crept by as my parents questioned him relentlessly. At ten o'clock my father conspicuously took out his watch.

As I watched John walk down the front step, I could hardly keep back the tears. I knew that my life was ruined and that he would never come back again after that first painful evening. But he did come back again and again.

My nineteenth birthday was quietly celebrated with a family dinner at noon. That afternoon—it was Sunday—my mother, father, and I went driving in the park as was our custom. From the window of the carriage we could see couples strolling leisurely about. Then I saw John with another girl. My heart began beating violently and I felt my face burning. I was sure that Mother could see the ruffles on my blouse trembling, but she was too intent upon her own thoughts.

That night John came calling. As he was not expected, Mother and Father had gone to visit my grandparents. It was our first night alone in almost a year of courtship.

"Why, John!" I said as coldly as I could.

"*Today* is your birthday . . . I thought tomorrow was the twenty-fifth. I wanted to wish you a happy birthday," he stammered.

The sudden sweetness of his smile was more than I could bear at the moment. The pang of jealousy that had plagued me in the afternoon once again took hold of me. "I can't let myself be in love with him," I thought wildly. But I knew that I was—hopelessly. I loved everything about him. Fearing that he would read my thoughts, I averted my eyes.

"Mother and Father are out, but come on in," I said, amazed at my own daring.

We sat side by side on the sofa saying nothing. Suddenly I felt his hand on my arm. It was a gentle touch, one that I never forgot. I gazed into his eyes, and this time I couldn't glance away.

"I love you," he said softly, and then again, "I love you, Jennie."

I was speechless and sat very still as he kissed me. I knew it was unheard of to kiss a man before engagement, but I didn't care. My mother would

have thought me very brazen. I must have told him I loved him then . . . the next thing I knew his arms were around me and I was kissing him back.

"Oh, my dearest sweetheart," he whispered.

As he smiled at me I loved him so much that I wanted to cry. I had forgotten about the girl in the park. I later found out she was his cousin.

I remember our wedding day so vividly. As I entered the church, a ray of light from the stained window above the altar intensified the music of the organ. I saw only John. Joining hands, we solemnly repeated our vows. The pressure of his hand and the strength of his voice seemed to be the only things in the world.

"I, John, take thee, Jennie . . ."

As the weeks and months passed, our love grew, and I knew that God had surely blessed us. Oh, we were cross with each other sometimes, but we never quarreled violently.

One night he brought some salted fish home.

"Guess what I brought?" he cried as he came in the back door.

"I don't have to. I can smell it," I replied.

"You don't like 'em?"

"I certainly don't."

"Well, do you mind if I have some for supper?"

"Yes, I do. The smell makes me sick."

I knew I was being unreasonable, but they did make me sick, and I had been cooking all afternoon. John threw them on the table and stalked out, saying, "Well, pardon me, your highness."

"You just don't care about anybody but yourself," I called after him.

I was greeted with silence. Nothing was said during supper. After the meal he didn't come back to help me with the dishes as he usually did. I stood over the dishpan and watched my tears splash into the water. I didn't hear John come into the kitchen, but I felt his hand on my shoulder. Before we knew it, we were in each other's arms.

"I'm sorry, darling," he said.

He declared that it was all his fault and I knew it was mine. We promised never to quarrel again, and we stuck by our promise better than most. A week or two later I discovered why the smell of the fish had made me ill. John and I were expecting a baby.

Our first and only child, John, Junior, was born in the spring. From my bed I could look out the window and see the peach tree blooming in the side yard. I remember John picked an armload of the blossoms and brought them in to us, the baby and me.

Everybody said little John looked like my side of the family. I denied it, and I knew I was right, for when he first smiled, it was the sudden sweet smile of his father. John was so proud of him. When he was in grammar school they used to play ball every night before supper when the weather was warm. Once John threw the ball right through the kitchen window into the pot of corn.

There are so many little things to remember—how we struggled to pay for the house and for our son's education—how I could never iron shirts to

suit him—funny things, sad things.

The years flew by, and our son grew to be a man.

Our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary came and went—too fast. That evening I saw John from the kitchen window as he came up the back walk. His shoulders were as straight as ever, but his hair was turning grey around his temples. I met him at the door and saw that he had in his arms a bouquet of peach blossoms.

Putting my arms around him, I held him close—there was no need for words. As I drew away, I noticed that a spasm of pain crossed his brow momentarily.

"What is it?" I asked.

"I don't know—just a funny little twinge in my chest."

"Maybe you'd better lie down."

Oh, no. It's not anything—probably indigestion."

I put the peach blossoms in water and we sat down to eat supper.

It was something, though. He died the next day—just slumped over in his chair while he was reading the morning paper—a heart attack the doctor said.

I could hardly believe that it was my John when I saw his still face. I leaned over and kissed his forehead—the last time.

I saw the peach trees from the window of the hearse as my son and I rode back from the funeral.

"Mother, are you all right?" he asked in a low voice.

"All right," I answered

He touched my hand and smiled.

Perhaps many will think my story a common one. It may be, but not to me. It is my life. I have had love, and that is the greatest gift to man.

*I sit at my window with a warm breeze on my face
And the clouds race by like time
Below me I see the wood land.
Green coolness drops from the trees
And close within these bounds there lies
A small cool lake—shimmering alone.
It is fringed by green, rust and rose
And threads of golden sun pour through the branches
Dappling the ground with gilded tones.
Great lavender flowers
Swathed in gay green foliage
Are sheltered by the stately pines.
There they live upon the water
Beauty in profusion
Lavender light in a gray world.
A quiet stillness stands
As silent as a prayer.*

Lilacs

By JEAN TOLBERT

Spring comes early in the South and love blossoms even before the flowers in the window boxes. For every Jane there's a Jack, for every pair of masculine shoulders a girl with April in her eyes.

Our Jane lives at 625 Adams—a white bungalow with window boxes that promise lilacs to match the blue of her eyes. Each day she waters the eager sprouts and turns her equally anxious heart toward—623 Adams. There in a yellow brick house lives our Jack, not tall, but terribly handsome and possessed of two football letters.

"And he loves me and he loves me and he loves me. And I love him and I love him. Jack—Jack—Jack. You wonderful, wonderful mine!"

And with the monomania of youth Jack does love her and she does love him—all spring.

But spring is only a prelude, a lovely interlude, before the hot days of summer—before the lilacs bloom and bloom and then wilt and wither in the heat of July. Our Jack and our Jane wilt a little too and all the freshness of the water pot and the crispness of a white cotton cannot make the lilacs stand proudly and love strut gladly.

"And you didn't call and I don't care—I just don't care. If you loved me like I love you—but *no*. You're a beast Jack Phillips, a horror, and I'll never know why I loved you—never."

Now, Jane, we know why you loved and you'll know too as the leaves turn yellow and pile upon the dead lilacs in the window box and Jack runs bravely onto that autumn field of glory. And Jane cheers and the crowd cheers, but mostly Jane. The window box is cleaned out along with the rumpled summer insolence and Jane's heart quickens once more from under Jack's football sweater.

The window at 625 Adams blooms with lilac eyes that watch the drive next door and smile as they wait their love—the true love that only 16 can know.

"We'll be forever happy, Jack. Just you and I. And I'll love forever, Jack. Wait for you alone always."

A love *can* last forever, but then who's to define that indefinite, endearing term—forever. For a season's moody and so is a girl and is a boy in love. And in the cold of a December day the love of spring and summer and autumn breaks a little at the edges under the first frost and becomes as brittle as a January moon.

Our Jane cries as she plants the seeds of a second spring.

"He didn't even smile, and he didn't even—I love him so and he didn't even—Jack, Jack."

And so in March the tears of a lost love water the flowers of another spring to be and wash the April into lilac eyes. Her heart is broken. Who can deny? But always tomorrow there's another season to love another Jack or Jim or Joe.

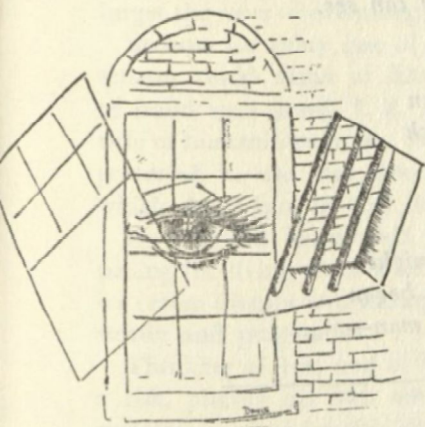
And the wise seeds in the window boxes know "if winter comes, can spring be far behind."

THE CITY

MARGOT SHAPIRO

*Night has fallen in the city of Macon
The light green lights gleam forth in the dark
Man has conquered the streets of the city
From the business district to the strip of park.*

*Yes, man has conquered the streets of the city.
Bent them to his will with an iron hand.
Built them with a sledge, a crane and a derrick
Into a city of night . . . a city of man.*



*A city of man with its joys and its sorrows
A city of man with a heartbeat of strife
And a surge of hope and a drive toward
tomorrow
And a clutching of now from uncertain life.*

*Now . . . the time to be light and gay
Now . . . the time to dance and sing
Now . . . to walk down the moonlit streets
And make the hollow pavements ring.*

*Ring and ring with the beat of life.
Laugh; it makes no difference how
Ring and ring with the rhythm of life
And the knowledge that this is now, now, now!*

*There's an ambulance screaming somewhere in the city
There's a family just come down from the farm;
There are taxis and autos and busses bustling
And lovers walking arm in arm.*

*There's the clang of horns and the sound of music
And the rumble of a train just pulling in.
There's the whoop of dusky Negro laughter
And the hushed and secret noise of sin.*

*There's the scent of roses and the sweet perfume
Of women powdered to the tips of their nose
Of men made gentle by the woman-odor
And the smell of popcorn from the picture show.*

*There's the glow of moonlight on every street
And down a black alley hidden from the night
The piercing silver gleam of a something
Hiding itself but giving back moonlight.*

*Yes, night has fallen in the city of Macon
 And food for all the senses is here.
 Man has conquered the streets . . . it seems—
 But a rude awakening dawn is here.*

*Light . . . and a world of freedom is gone.
 Light . . . and the streets grow hard and cold.
 Light . . . and the city is shackled to work
 Overnight become noise and old.*

*And the piercing silver gleam of a something
 Is a garbage pail spewing debris
 And the powdered women look wrinkled and old
 For the night is blind but the day can see.*

*See that the city is full of sorrow
 See pregnant women without a man
 See the tomorrow we strive to clutch
 Changed to a filthy garbage can!*

*And the pitiless morning light
 Awoke from your vision veiled in night
 And know that since civilized life began
 The streets have really conquered man—*

CONFLICT

By JAN GAY

Approximately twenty people recognized Senator Joseph B. Richardson during his perspiring walk from the corner to his apartment. This was not surprising, since his massive, thoughtful face appeared in Washington papers with weekly regularity.

He didn't usually mind being "the typical senator" to half of Washington. He was big, ruggedly distinguished, and graying—a natural for the part. But on this particular afternoon Joseph B. Richardson was not happy.

"I feel like a damn senator," he muttered. That is, he felt hot under the collar literally and figuratively, which seemed to him two chronic states of harassed Washington lawmakers in the current sultry weather.

Even Sam, the elevator boy, with his customary "Hullo, Mr. Richardson, is the country still here?" didn't cheer him. The colored boy grinned. "The Missus tole me to tell you she was gone shoppin', and there was some ice cream in the refrigerator."

"Thanks, Sam," said the senator absently, as he got off at fifth floor. He

left the boy wondering "whut them politicians done done to make Mr. Joseph mad now." It was a tribute to Mr. Joseph that Sam never considered *him* a politician.

He felt that they had "done done" plenty, as he entered the apartment. Heading for the refrigerator, he reflected on the meeting from which he had just come. The welfare board seemed to prefer personal scraps to any kind of positive action. He had wasted a whole afternoon listening to Sims and Johnson squabble, when he needed so desperately to work on his relief reform program.

This project was dearest of any to his heart. He knew of the graft which went on in the distribution work of several Washington relief agencies. He knew of the inferior goods that frequently went to underprivileged people, at a substantial profit to the agency acting as "middle man." He couldn't forget the cases of overcharging and short shipments which he had dug up.

Because for every case of fraud found in the capital's welfare work, the senator could think of fifty children crippled or starved—and the cases of fraud were many. J. B. Richardson would have been indignant at the title of humanitarian, but that's what he was. For not only was he politically powerful, he was also powerfully honest—possessing that kind of honesty which drove him to seek fair play for all people.

He followed his normal procedure, this hot Washington afternoon, of pacing the living room floor as he planned the next day's schedule. Vanilla ice cream disappeared in large gulps as he walked back and forth, solid and steady and purposeful . . . thinking. . .

Thinking of Joe, and of how well the boy was doing. Of course he ran a risk, placing his own son on an investigation of Washington's slickest grafters . . . but for this job Joe happened to be the keenest, the quickest-witted, the most honest person he knew. . . The senator reflected that his son had done excellent work on the relief project so far. Last night's report alone could send at least ten of the rascals to prison!

The telephone's ring stopped a flow of parental pride. "Hello . . . yes." His manner changed abruptly. "Of couse I know it, Carson. I sent him after you. I know what you're up to. . . What do you mean, I'd better call him off? Wait—" He fought down alarm—"What do you know about Jack Adams? I should have known your crowd was behind that. . . By God, no, I won't tell Joe to quit! You're too much of coward to do anything to him, Carson!"

He slammed down the receiver, feeling weaker than he cared to admit—just as Joseph, Jr., came bursting into the room. His son sailed his hat toward the sofa and his newspaper toward the coffee table—with noticeably poor aim.

"How are you, Chief? What's up? You look kinda tuckered out."

The senator fought for composure. Should he call Joe off—give him no explanation—maybe save his life . . . No, his son was entitled to know at least what he was up against.

"Joe—" he began. "Joe, have you got much on Carson?"

"That's what I was going to tell you, Chief. I'm pretty sure he's the big

wheel. He doesn't know it, but I'm hot on his trail." Joe was excited.

"Son—Carson knows that."

"How do you—Wait a minute." He saw the look on his father's face. "Did Carson—what has he told you?"

"I'll tell you straight, son. He called me and said to take you off, or you'd get Adam's treatment."

"What did you tell him?"

"Nothing except what I thought of him. I had to talk to you."

"Yes."

The senator said impulsively, "Look, Joe. McFarley just got back from California. I think he's the man to finish this job. I'll call him right now." He reached for the phone.

"No, sir! Joe stopped him. "I don't mean to sound stuck-up, but I'm the only one who can keep on with it. I'm at a crucial point, Father."

Richardson exploded. "But, blast it, you're my—" he halted. "All right, boy. It's your decision."

"Yes, sir. But you know I feel about like you do on a lot of things. And I don't think you'd quit. Would you?" Joe challenged him.

He answered slowly. "I don't know, Joe. When I was your age—no. But now, I think maybe it's better to be a little cautious. Who knows how much good you can do later, if you let up a bit on this right now?"

Joe thought about that. The two men looked at each other, and they understood each other very well.

Joe spoke first. "I don't know when I'll get another chance to help ten thousand kids again!" he grinned. "Maybe I'm supposed to do all my boy scout deeds at once."

His father didn't—couldn't—speak. "I can stop him yet," he thought. But he didn't.

Joe rescued his hat from the rug and started out. As he opened the door he said, "Let's don't worry Mother with any of this. I've got a feeling Carson isn't as tough as he pretends to be. 'Bye, Chief."

Joseph B. Richardson left the apartment only minutes after his son. He wasn't thinking coherent thoughts, but he instinctively wanted to be doing something. He walked, and remembered things about Joe—his grin, his liking for people. And around his thoughts was a mass of fear.

A tiny church had its door open just ahead. The senator impulsively went in, and the deep conflict inside him forced him to the front altar of that little sanctuary. He knelt—and mingling with his fear for Joe came another thought. He was proud of his son.

He knelt—beneath the church's one large stained-glass window, with its portrayal of the crucifixion scene.

He knelt, without seeing the window's inscription, above his kneeling place. It read:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son . . ."

Sally Bunglemouse

By MADGE HILL

Sally Bunglemouse is a friend of mine. Sally Bunglemouse graduated from college one year after majoring in "Conversational Sanskrit" and minoring in "Primitive life in the Virgin Islands before 1842 and the effect it had upon the development of the thyroid gland." Sally's father, Mr. Bunglemouse, (they had the same name because they were closely related) sat down and figured that in the four years that Sally had been in college, he had written checks amounting to \$163,472.78 for her expenses, of which, \$163,471.62 of them were no good. He then had a little talk with Sally and together they decided that she should go to work and try to pay off the wailing creditors which were camped upon their door step.

And so one morning early in June, Sally Bunglemouse climbed out of her ivory tower and with a determined tilt to her little elfin head, set out to conquer the cold, cruel world which she had read about but had never seen. The first place she tried to gain employment thought she was selling magazines and promptly threw her out. This impression was given to the receptionist probably because of the large package under her arm which was a sorted collection of old term papers she had written in the course of four years. She didn't want her prospective employers to think she'd wasted four years of her life. No sir, she'd been busy.

The second place she tried . . . well, the story went something like this:

RECEPTIONIST: Whatta you want?

SALLY: I'd like to see Mr. Dinglemus. It's about a job.

RECEPTIONIST: I'm sorry, dearie, he just went out of town.

SALLY: But I have to see someone. I've just finished college and now I want to work.

RECEPTIONIST: Look, dearie, let me give you a piece of advice. Go somewhere else. Look at me. (She stood up, and turned around showing a pink slip peeping daintily from beneath her sloping hemline.) Fifteen years in the same office and the same job! (She gave emphasis to this last statement with a loud pop of her gum.) Try the office next door.

And so Sally left and as she turned to thank the helpful receptionist she saw the girl pick up a movie magazine and an emery board and begin to read as she idly filed her flaming red nails.

The bosses of the third and fourth places had all just gone out of town and weren't expected back until Christmas. Sally didn't think this strange at all that all the bosses in all the businesses in town should all go out of town at the same time. Live and let live was her motto and so she didn't think about it.

Success was hers at the fifth place. As this was the only place during her whole adventure of getting a job that the man smiled at her, she recorded it in her diary and has kindly let me reprint it.

MAN: Good morning, Miss Bunglemouse, what can I do for you?

SALLY: I want a job.

MAN: That's understandable. Tell me, what do you know that would be of use to our office?

SALLY: I know that rough dry laundry service was started by W. M. Barnes in 1892 in Philadelphia.

MAN: Ah—no, that wasn't exactly what I had in mind.

SALLY: (Eagerly) Did you know that the Church of Brethren in Anderson, Ind., has a membership of 185,584?

MAN: (Taken aback, somewhat) No, I didn't. Now isn't that interesting. But what I want to know . . . do you type?

SALLY: Type? No, I can't say I do know how, but if it's a new dance step I can learn. I was in the dance club all four years of college.

MAN: No, I'm sorry Miss Bunglemouse, but somehow you've missed the point. Why don't you go to school for a few months. A nice good business school.

SALLY: School! But I've been to school for the past 16 years!

MAN: Yes, I know. A shame, isn't it?

Now she didn't get the job, but he smiled at her and that's the important thing. Human kindness. Sally thinks maybe he was laughing at her, but of course this is silly.

Receptionist number seven was also nice to her. She gave her a cup of coffee and sent her in to see the boss.

"Ah, ha' Miss Bunglemouse," said the man who had the head of a rabbit and a nose that twitched, "I can tell you're just the person we've been looking for."

"You mean me? I can't even type."

"Of course I mean you, and don't worry about the typing part, we hire girls to do nothing but type. All you'll have to do is sit at that desk and make circles around every third 'E' in the reports that the salesmen will turn over to you. Now, when can you start?"

"Tomorrow."

"Fine, and now just one more little thing. There will be a lot of night work. In fact, if you want to, you can just come in at five every afternoon."

And Sally, although she'd been in college for four years, knew enough to walk out.

Poor Sally Bunglemouse. But this isn't a sad story for she did find work. You didn't think she spent four years without learning something did you? The man who finally hired her told her that if she kept her mouth shut no one would ever know she was educated and so for ten long years she's been mute and no one has ever suspected her secret. . . . Wait, there she is now. See that window across the street? And see the girl in it stirring fudge? That's our gal Sal! Sometimes she blows bubbles and when Christmas comes, she runs electric trains to show the crowd what's inside, and what's more important she's in the public eye at all times. Never let it be said that working in the window of the local five and dime isn't wonderful work!

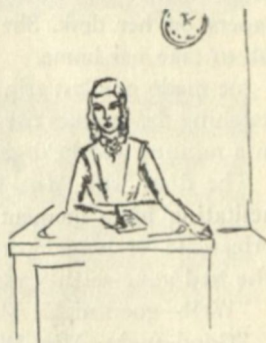
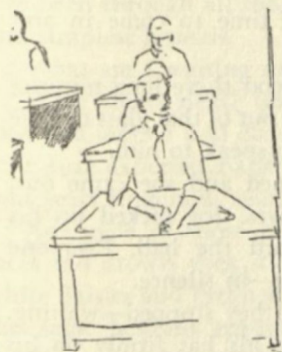
SMAILLIW SSIM

CAROLYN BLAKELY

She could feel him watching her through the plate glass partition of her office, but whenever she looked up he had his eyes averted, and bent doggedly over his desk like a guilty first grader. Poor Joe! He was so stubborn, but so sweet.

She turned back to the manuscript she was reading and tried to pay attention to the neatly typed page. But in a moment she felt his eyes again. She glanced up quickly and met his eyes, but immediately he looked away, bent over his desk again, biting his bottom lip the way she had seen him

do a thousand times. It annoyed her. She continued to stare through the glass until her eyes focused on the black letters painted on her door. SMAILLIW SSIM. It was her name — only backwards. It should have made her feel important because it meant that she was a top reader in the Bryant Publishing House. But



how could she feel important if she always had to look at her name backwards? That name on the door was what had really caused all the trouble anyway. It represented a very comfortable salary—a much better salary than Joe made. If only Joe weren't so proud when it came to that business about the salary.

"No," he'd insisted, "we absolutely can't get married now. Not until you're not the one making all the money. Why, you'd be practically supporting me! We'll have to wait, but don't worry, honey, I'll catch up with you."

That's exactly what he'd said last night, when he should have been proposing to her. And she'd gotten upset and called him stubborn, and said she wasn't going to wait around all her life for him. Of course, she didn't really feel that way. It was just because she hated to put off getting married again. They had put it off so long. But he must know she didn't really mean it. Why, all he had to do was just walk into her office—today—and say one word, and everything would be all right. She'd even tell him that she'd wait as long as he wanted to. If he'd just come in today. And Miss Williams, after one last gaze at the unnoticed figure, conscientiously returned to her manuscript.

Joe Weaver pushed the green eyeshade back and wiped his forehead wearily. What a pile of work! It didn't look like he'd ever catch up. Then he glanced up and saw Mary in her office, bent over some papers, Gosh, she was pretty! Why on earth had he been so stubborn last night? Why was he such a proud fool when all in the world he wanted was just to marry her? She ought to know that was all he really wanted. She shouldn't be so hard on him. Well, he was sorry now. All she had to do was say she hadn't meant it—just make the first step. If she would walk in right now and say she was sorry, he'd marry her today. Then Joe saw the boss looking at him, so he sat up and tried to get his mind back on his work.

When five o'clock came, the office always emptied in a matter of seconds. Like a bunch of automatons, everyone stood up, closed his desk, put on his coat, and raced for the elevator. Today Miss Williams lingered a little longer than usual, putting on her coat. She very carefully stacked up the papers on her desk. She was giving Joe plenty of time to come in and ask to take her home.

Joe made one last trip to the water cooler and stood there long minutes watching the bubbles rise to the top. She'd be coming out of that glass cubicle in a minute, and he'd give her every opportunity to speak to him.

The door with Miss Williams' name on it opened and she came out, hesitating for a moment as she pulled on her gloves. Joe picked up his brief case of home work and slowly moved toward the hall. Everyone else had gone so they rode the elevator down alone—in silence.

"Well—good night, Mr. Weaver," she said when they stopped—waiting.

"Good night, Miss Williams," he said, jamming his hat firmly on his head.

And they walked off down the street in opposite directions.

GRADUATION

By GAYLE ATTAWAY

The speaker's voice droned on and on. The hum of a distant lawn mower seemed to accompany the steady, rhythmic swish of the cardboard hand fans. The scraping of restless feet and creaking of the auditorium chairs added a bass note to the hushed symphony.

The voice droned on and on. All the rest of life and nature idly kept in tune with the descending warmth that invaded and overtook the auditorium.

Fay's eyes passed over the gay printed fans, courtesy of the local furniture store, over the flick of white handkerchiefs as they darted at drops of perspiration, over the flowered summer straws atop damp curls, up to the far right window.

The leaves in the top of the elm tree across the street were still. The clouds didn't even bother to float languidly by. Nothing moved.

"So this is what it's like to graduate. This is the beginning and the end,

so I've heard. The climax of twelve years of my life. The beginning of my future, rather poetic, but that's what I've been hearing for weeks now.

"I've reached a goal, some kind of a goal, I'm sure. It's not an unusual one, for there must be thousands like me sitting just as I am, quietly, waiting. . . .

"Waiting for what? Waiting for the speaker to finish? Waiting for that piece of ribbon tied paper? Waiting for the hand-shaking and congratulations afterwards, the smiles and tears, and laughter? Waiting—just waiting.

"It seems I've been sitting here for hours instead of minutes, yet I'm not anxious for this ceremony to be over. This is the last little bit of high school I have left to hang on to. This is all. When I leave this chair and walk out that door—it'll be over, completely and finally.

"I've spent the past twelve years of my life doing the expected things. I've been through all the phases from paper dolls and ponies to high heels and strapless formals.

"What am I waiting for now?

"What comes next? College? Yes, I suppose so. That's what usually follows and mother and daddy have their hearts set on it. Will that be another four year expected pattern and will I find myself on a day like this one four years from now, same heat, same fans, same wilted straw hats—waiting?

"Are some of those people out there, facing me with their perspiring faces and drowsy eyes, still waiting? Did they ever sit on a platform behind white daisies and green ferns and wait and wonder and wait? Did they feel this same hesitant expectancy, eager, yet unsure?

"It's such a big world with so many things to be done. Will there be enough time to do all of them. When do I start. How will I know.

"But—what have all these people done since their graduation day. Does one have to drive with boundless ambition and reach for high hung stars and achieve important goals to say they have done the most with their life?

"These people appear so calm and satisfied and pleased with life as it is now. Don't they know the world is beckoning, calling, demanding that we give of ourselves. It takes so much of us and yet we never really know what we receive in return till many years after. That must be the perspective and balance I've heard mentioned.

"Did these people know what life held in store for them after they took off their caps and gowns? Did they make their own way or has life just turned them at will? Are they happy? Have they missed anything? Do they know?

"It's all so muddled and confused. Whoever said youth was wasted on youth had a point. Will I feel this way four or five or ten years from now or will I, too, be willing to sit and smile and watch other young graduates stand to receive their diplomas for their twelve years effort?

"How am I to know. I doubt if I ever will, even when my anticipated actions and emotions become a reality. For by then I will have forgotten my feelings of today. Then I will become one of them, of these people before me.

"That world is so big though. Yet, we only see such a small portion at a time, that right before our eyes. Like that patch of sky blue and those sunstreaked leaves out the window. That's all of the actual outdoor world I can see, yet I know it's all there and when I march up the aisle, out the door I'll see more. And the farther I go, the more I'll see, but only one portion at a time. But all the rest that I've seen will be behind me as a background.

"And no matter what the final vision or sight is, I'll have had all the previous views. If I appreciate them as I go along, then does it really matter whether or not I reach one of those high goals?

"Oh, life is so big, and so wonderful . . . and, it isn't me that should be waiting at all. I mustn't wait. I must go to *it*. Life is waiting, waiting for me to make my first step.

"I wonder which direction it'll be in."

The speaker's voice became louder in intensity of his conclusions. The cardboard fans swished a little faster. The creaking of auditorium seats and the scraping of feet was suddenly more noticeable. The figures clad in caps and gowns stirred in their expectancy.

Fay, reluctantly shifted her gaze from visions to realities, and drying her perspiring palms with her handkerchief, prepared to stand and receive her diploma.

MEDITATION

FRANCES DREW

*The sun shines through where a pane is gone
And makes spot of light upon the floor:
To its brightness my eyes are drawn,—
It shows the light that is without the door.*

*It shows the glory of the world outside,—
A glimpse of what it's like beyond this wall.
But I couldn't stop the sun even if I tried,—
And it is gone now leaving only shadows tall.*

*It has left a feeling hard to tell.
It is as if I've had a glimpse of Glory,—
Its peace and joy, with me for a spell,
That has made me tell this story:*

*The sunshine is the love of God
Which comes to all who climb life's way,
To take or not, though it brightens all they've trod,
Or is seen as a single bright spot once a day.*

*So with a man's soul,—just look in his eyes:
Full of sunshine, they'll give sparks of gold;
If not, he's gloomy and full of sighs.
Simple! the eyes are the windows of the soul!*

Harry'll Getcha

By JEAN ARMSTRONG

Once upon a time there were three little pigs named Tom, Dick and Harry. Harry was the one with all the muscles in the crowd because he used to spend all day working in a haberdasher's shop, trying on hats. Tom and Dick didn't have much on the ball, but they were dern nice guys anyway and bought their own cigarettes.



They lived together because they had found out that three can live as cheaply as one if two don't eat. But they worked out in shifts so everything was all right.

One day they were sitting in front of their picture window, looking at the world going by, when who should they see coming but Horace, a rather antagonistic wolf they had known back in their story-book days. Now Horace looked as if he'd been having a rather bad time of it lately. His coat was in need of a Toni, and his nails were a fright.

Tom, Dick and Harry felt sure that Horace wasn't coming to their house, since they'd given him such a bad time back in the old days. But sure enough, old Horace came right up on their porch and rang their door bell.

Well, they didn't know what to do, since wolves at one's door usually mean that there's something bad wrong. But Harry, being the only one with muscles sinewy enough to keep his knees from knocking, decided to go to the door and see what the old boy wanted.

After much bantering about the weather, the Republican congress and the like, it turned out that all Horace wanted was a free meal or, he said, "I'll be forced to blow your house up with a stick of dynamite I borrowed from the highway department." This worried Harry, because they lived in a little prefab job that shook every time the wind blew. But Harry had a cool head, so he told the wolf to go get his dynamite if he wanted to. They weren't handing out any free meals to any wolf with a reputation like his. Horace muttered something about that being a fine way to treat an old pal, and left to get his dynamite.

After he had gone the three pigs decided on a course of action. They would build a stronger house. Tom wanted to make it out of concrete blocks since his uncle had one, and it had withstood many a hurricane. Dick wanted to build it out of brick since his brother-in-law was in the business and he could get the brick at half price. But Harry was in favor of using the bomb shelter he had bought during the war and put out in the back yard in case of emergencies. They argued and argued, but couldn't agree, so each one decided to build his own.

When Horace came back with his dynamite, he was amazed at what he saw. Three little houses all in a row—one of concrete block, one of

brick, and one cement bomb shelter. Luckily he had brought more than one stick of dynamite, so he began with the concrete block and blew it sky high. Then he grabbed Tom and put him in the basket he had brought along for just such a purpose.

Next he blew the top off the brick house, and stuck Dick in the basket with Tom. It wouldn't be long, he mused, before he'd have a nice roast-pig dinner. Harry's bomb shelter was more of a problem—it took seven blasts to rout Harry out, but he finally did by mixing a little tear gas with the last one. Harry came out coughing and mad, but Horace popped him into the basket before he knew what had happened. Then he picked up the basket and started home.

Well! The three pigs were pretty upset, because they knew the hot time that awaited them when they got to the wolf's house. But when Harry's eyes stopped watering, he immediately cooked up a plan. (Harry was the one with the brains, remember?)

Harry was a well-read little cuss, and just that morning he had seen a story in the paper that gave him an idea. So after he had time to brief everybody, Harry peeped out, and saw that it was time for him to go into action. All of a sudden, Harry yelled, "Drop that basket and salute Stalin, Comrade, there's a red light!"

Right away Horace let go of the basket, jumped to attention, and stood waiting for the light to change green. Then Tom and Dick hopped out of the basket and ran away as fast as their little legs would carry them to get the FBI, while Harry stayed behind to follow Horace.

When the boys with the badges came, Harry told them right where Horace was, and they arrested him so he'd be easy to investigate. Then they pinned a medal on Harry, and made him an honorary Democrat. Harry was so touched he couldn't trust himself to speak, so he just took Tom and Dick by the hand and they went back to their prefab job to sit in front of the picture window and watch the world go by.

Harry had done his bit.

MORAL: Don't put all your pigs in one basket; or, better yet, Harry'll getcha if ya don't watch out.

YOU NEVER KNOW

By SUZANNE McCOWEN

Sometimes you never comprehend the influence of common objects in our world. There are objects of varied forms—large, small, curved, angular—which often appear meaningless and useless to us. Yet each has its function; each its significance. Take a pane of glass enclosed in a steel frame—yes, a mere window. But a window symbolizes feelings that touch the core of man's existence, for it oftentimes echoes his innermost emotions. A window signifies protection—freedom—insight. But it can also denote exclusion.

Such was the feeling aroused in Willy Barber's mind as he gazed at the window of Williams Jewelry Store that January night. It was late—the city was bedded down for her night of rest before the day's writhing throngs invoked new activity. The streets were silent save for the occasional swish-swash of street cleaners. Chill gusts of wind whipped around Willy's feet, but he was oblivious—oblivious to the calm and to the cold, for his sole attention was on the jewelry store window.

The first time he had noticed it—that must have been 3 months ago—it had been only a plate of glass, only a window. That was before he had seen the watch behind it. And now after months of unwavering vigil at the window, it had become his enemy for it stood between him and the watch.

That January night Willy pressed his face close to the chilling touch of his enemy. His steel-grey eyes squinted as he studied the watch under the single, dim light. It was still there—the watch, *his* watch. A strong feeling of possessiveness overwhelmed him as he looked at it. The gold, it surely must be gold, shimmered in the light's glow. If he could only touch it—he cupped his hand and shivered imagining the coldness of the metal. Wouldn't he be somethin' with that watch in his pocket! He chuckled as he thought of the expressions on the faces of men at the plant. No, he wouldn't be just Willy Barber, mechanic—he'd really be hot stuff when he'd pull out that gold watch. If he only had it! It was a cinch he could never buy it—what with Pearl grabbin' his pay check every week. Just his luck to be tagged to Pearl for a wife—everything for her, nothing for him. If there was only some way he could get through that window—

"Kinda late to be hangin' 'round town, ain't it, buddy?" The corner cop looked him over as he strolled by.

"O.K., O.K., I'm movin'. Don't hurt to look none, does it?" Willy snorted.

Willy hunched his shoulders as he pulled the jacket under his chin and ambled down the street. As soon as the cop was out of sight, Willy stopped in an alley. That cop had his nerve pokin' his nose in his business. He wasn't doin' nothin' but lookin' at *his* watch. He was tired of people telling him what to do, treatin' him like trash. He'd show them all if he only had the watch—yep, he'd show them he was big stuff.

Swiftly he retraced his steps and again his face was pressed to the jewelry store window. He had to have that watch—there must be some way he could get it from the window. The window—he was sick and tired of always lookin' in on things he wanted, tired of always being' on the outside. His muscles tightened with an impulse to smash his enemy—he'd show everybody he could get what he wanted. Nothing' was gonna stop Willy Barber.

He clenched his teeth, raised his arm, and split the window with his fist. The shattered glass resounded in the empty street. He reached in and closed his hand around the watch—the coolness of the metal tingled his skin and he panted as he withdrew it and slipped it into his pocket.

The shrillness of a whistle blasted the silence and pounding feet echoed on the pavement.

"Youthere—stop or I'll shoot!"

"Run, run! Get away, away," shouted Willy's brain, but his feet were frozen and his eyes were hypnotized by the gleam of the gun in the cop's hand.

"It's you, huh? Well, you can't get away-so easy, bub. Come on, hand it over."

"Ha-hand what over?" Willy stuttered

"O.K. up with the hands, I'll see for myself." The cop's frisking hands delved into Willy's pockets."

"You can't have it," cried Willy. "It's my watch, it's mine!"

"Hmm, you watch, eh? Well, take a close look at it, buddy. It ain't even a real one. Ever hear of dummy watches in a jewelry store window? You don't think they'd slap a real one out for the like of you to nab? Well, come along and we'll settle this at the station."

A dummy watch! A fake! Not real! Willy's body shook with sobs as they walked away—down the street—away from the window. Away from the window—inanimate object, yes, but pulsating with an unforgettable life in the mind of Willy Barber.

WIND AND A WINDOW

JODY MANN

*I cannot sleep
The breathing long and deep
Beyond the shadow of my lamp . . .
Oblivious to night and waking thoughts . . .
Sighs a cloak of solitude around me.
I am alone.
I can but heed the drone
Of rising wind outside that filters through the window
Lifting papers off the desk,
Settling on my face with a chill born of darkness.
My world is small . . .
A chair, a desk, a beam of light . . . and shadows
That sink into a black abyss
Of nothingness . . .
Where are you
Whose face within the yellow frame
I watch from day to day and wait
To see it . . . call my name?
Yet nothing.
No move . . .
No smile . . .
No real existence in the mile
On mile of wind and black that swirl between
Your arms and mine.*

*But you are there.
I know you well.
You are a slant of ink across a folded page,
Envelopes that gather age
And calendar the months from then till now.
Will then be now again?
One day . . .
Some day . . .
The wind is high.
Across the court a cone of light
Slides shaky fingers into fog that steals about an arch. . .
One world. I another.
Somewhere your eyes concealed out there
Might single out my light and me
And through the darkness share my sleepless night.
So void is that world though . . . isolated foggy arch . . .
That if such space of nothingness
Has swallowed you
You are alone
As I.
How does one lift the hand to write
Love letters . . .
To night?
Would you understand if I poured out the wind
And silent sky
On paper?
Wind that seems to drive before it
Every memory struggling in my sleepless brain
To be renewed
In thought?
Gusts of then that rise like wind . . .
They are the same . . .
Tonight.
I have but to put out the light . . .
Desk and chair will cease to be.
All this world will sink in sleep
But foggy arch . . .
Wind . . .
And me.
One window closed would still the wind and leave my mind
At rest . . .
One shade drawn down . . .
Deprived of sound . . . deprived of sight,
No longer can I be alone,
For I am one
With night . . .
Night.*

The Pet Shop

By SARA THURSTON

Little Jake pressed his brown nose flat against the pet shop window. Yes, he could see—way in the back—the great black head resting between the two white paws. He grinned and felt all good inside. Old Dan was still here. Mr. McFarley hadn't sold him.

He started to open the door. Then he saw Mr. McFarley talking to a woman in the front of one of the dog kennels. No, it'd be best to wait and go in after Mr. McFarley was on the other side of the store, near the funny-colored birds. Mr. McFarley was such a big man, and he didn't like people hanging around his dogs unless they were going to buy.

"What do you want *this* time, boy?" Mr. McFarley would say.

And then Little Jake would have to tell him again, "Ah jus' come to see Dan, Mister."

Mr. McFarley would frown, because he didn't like folks who came just to see a dog and not to buy one. But it wouldn't be long now before Little Jake would be buying a dog. Not just any old dog, but Dan. Miss Lucy had paid him this afternoon, and now he only needed seventy-five cents more to have the \$6.82, and \$6.82 was what Mr. McFarley was asking for Old Dan. He could hardly wait to tell Dan the good news.

Through the window Little Jake saw Old Dan open his good eye and snap at a fly. Then he closed it and was asleep again.

Suddenly Mr. McFarley and the lady moved to the other side of the store. Little Jake opened the door softly and went in the shop, trying to keep his worn-out tennis shoes from squeaking.

"Danny," he said, reaching his hand through the wire and touching the silky black head.

Old Dan licked the brown hand and his white tail thumped against the floor.

"Ah's back to see ya, Danny."

The white tail thumped harder, and the wet nose nuzzled the brown hand.

"Ain' go'n be long now, Danny. Ah most got enuff. An' next Sat'dy when ah comes from Miss Lucy's ah'll have it all, and then you can come home with me an' we won't never be apart no more." The brown hand stroked the long ears.

Little Jake sat on the floor and got right next to the wire—so he could be closer to Dan and so Mr. McFarley wouldn't see him.

No, it wouldn't be any time now until Old Dan would go home with him. Only seventy-five cents more. He had waited so long for Old Dan to be his. Why, he'd waited most a year since that first day when Miss Lucy, the white lady he worked for in the yard on Saturday, had sent him to the pet shop to buy some bird seed for her yellow bird. He'd seen Old Dan

when he first walked in the door. He wasn't barking and jumping like all the other dogs. He was lying down on his pillow, and his eyes were looking up real lonesome like, and his tail was thumping softly. Jake had reached down and stroked the black head.

"What's his name, Mister?" Little Jake had timidly asked Mr. McFarley when he paid for Miss Lucy's bird seed.

"Which one?"

"Th' last one—th' big black and white dog, Mister."

"Oh," and he'd laughed, "that *old* dog? Dan. He's blind in one eye."

Little Jake had gone over to Old Dan then, and patted his head again and scratched his ear. Old Dan's tail thumped hard, and he closed his eyes. Then Little Jake left, but when he opened the door and looked back, Old Dan was standing up and gave a soft whine that only Little Jake had heard.

Since then, every Saturday, on his way home from Miss Lucy's, he stopped by the pet shop and talked to Old Dan and tried to keep him from being lonesome. Sometimes he even brought him a biscuit left over from his lunch.

And Old Dan would listen to Little Jake talk—his black head between his paws and looking up at him with his good eye, understanding better than anyone in the world.

And then one day, Little Jake began to think of the warm fireplace at the shack, his mama's hot biscuits, and the big, rolling hills in the back. And then he thought of Old Dan.

"How much you ask fer him, Mister?" he'd said.

"For who?"

"Him—the big one."

"Oh, Old Dan? \$6.82. He's blind in one eye."

And Little Jake had saved the extra money he'd made at Miss Lucy's on Saturday's and kept it all in the match box under his bed.

Old Dan looked up now with his good eye and his tail thumped like he was saying he was glad he would be going to the shack with Jake.

"You want something, boy?" Mr. McFarley's voice boomed suddenly.

"Naw sir, ah's jus' goin'. Ah jus' come in t' see Dan. Ah's leavin'. He started to tell Mr. McFarley that when he got the seventy-five cents he was going to buy Old Dan, but he was scared to.

Mr. McFarley went back to the other side of the pet shop.

"Ah's got to go, Dan, but ah'll be back, an' next time we won' never have t' say goodbye, cause ah'll have the seventy-five cents and all the \$6.82, an' you can go home with me."

Little Jake reached over and patted the large head lovingly. Old Dan licked the brown hand. Then Little Jake opened the door to the pet shop and went out.

* * * * *

The old dog, with his good eye, looked past the window at the small boy walking away. Then he put his head between his paws and closed his eyes. But Old Dan wasn't asleep. He was thinking about the boy.

If only the boy could have stayed longer—it always seemed so long before he came again. He wondered where the boy went and what he was

doing. If only he could be walking behind him now instead of lying in this pen. A fly lit on his nose. He snapped at it, then spit it out. Would the day never come when he would be free again, outdoors? It had been so long, too long to even remember clearly, when he had been outside, free. That was when he was a young dog and before the Master had died. They used to walk together over the hills, he and the Master, and listen to the roaring of the river. That had been so long ago. Then there was the terrible day—after the Master had died, when they brought him here and put him in this pen near fifty other barking dogs and across from all those caged, chirping birds.

At first he thought, when people came in to look at the animals in the shop, that someone would take him. But it was just the younger dogs that got to go—that somebody wanted. There had been a little girl once, and how he would have loved to have gone with her, but she had taken a tiny Cocker in her arms instead. And the young man—he'd wanted so much to be taken by him. He'd sat up straighter than usual and wagged his tail. But the man had taken a young German Shepherd away on a leash. And there had been others, but none of them had taken him, and so pretty soon, Old Dan grew accustomed to no one wanting to take him, and curled up on his pillow and slept and thought about the days long ago with the Master.

"That *old* dog?" Mr. McFarley would say when someone asked about him. "He's been here eight years. No one seems to want him. Too old, I guess, or it may be because he's blind in one eye."

Old Dan licked his paws now. All that didn't matter anymore, because now he had the boy. The boy loved him, and wanted him. Dan could tell just by the soft, easy way he'd scratch his ears and pat his head.

Someday soon, the boy would take him with him. Someday, and the boy had said today that the wonderful day would soon be here. The day when they could walk together in the woods and feel the cool breezes. And the day when they could be together forever.

It wouldn't be long. The boy had promised. And the boy wouldn't fail him. Old Dan looked through the wire past the window where he'd last seen the boy. Then he sighed, nestled his big black head between his paws, and closed his eyes.

* * * *

Mr. McFarley pulled the covers over the bird cage and began to sweep out the shop. He was glad it was closing time. The pain in his back was starting up again, and he wanted to sit down. Well, he'd be home in a few minutes with Gerta and could rest then.

He leaned over and gave the Persian kittens some fresh water. Darn that back! He couldn't take much more of this leaning over. Maybe he was just getting too old. He'd had the shop for thirty years. Even during the depression he'd kept the shop, though he'd lost everything else. The shop didn't bring much—but it'd brought enough so he could pay for the little brick house Gerta'd always wanted. It hadn't brought quite enough to send Betty Jo off to school, but Betty Jo'd gotten herself a scholarship. No, the

shop hadn't brought much, but so far it had been enough to meet any crisis.

Mr. McFarley sat down, and wiped his red, sweating face. But Gerta's operations. Would he ever be able to pay for them? The doctor had said she'd need three, and then there were nurses to pay for. Could he ever get the \$9,000. He wiped his shaggy brow. He had \$3,000 in the bank, but how would he ever get the rest? Could he depend on his shop? \$6,000? He doubted it.

He walked to the back of the shop now, to give the dogs some water. When he came to the last kennel, he stopped before the large black and white dog. Poor Old Dan. No one had ever wanted him. He'd been a fine dog, when he'd first bought him eight years ago—when the dog's owner had died. He could have sold him for thirty or forty dollars, but nobody wanted him because he had only one eye. And now Old Dan was so old, no one would ever want him. Mr. McFarley patted the dog's head dutifully. The dog was almost distasteful now, he was so old, and they had to clean out his pen two or three times day. He would have made somebody a fine pet—he was so gentle and loving. Mr. McFarley had tried to tell people that. He'd even cut the price down to \$6.82.

He looked at the large body. Eleven dollars a week he paid to feed Old Dan. Eleven dollars. He ate so much. Eleven, multiplied by 52—\$572 a year—times eight years—four thousand and . . . Mr. McFarley shook his head. He couldn't keep paying that now. If he could sell Old Dan, that would help. Of course, the dog probably wouldn't live more than a year or two longer, but still—eleven dollars a day.

He could give it to someone. That was it. But who would want it? There was a little Negro boy who came in sometimes to pet the dog, but he'd never asked to buy Old Dan. The boy probably came in every pet shop like that just to pass the time.

Mr. McFarley looked at the tired old black and white body, and at the blind eye. Death would be better for Old Dan. It would be peace for him. It wouldn't be wrong. Just the prick of the long needle and Old Dan could sleep forever—and that would be better than dying by degrees here in the shop and eating eleven dollars worth of food every day.

It would be the kindest thing in the world to do for Old Dan. He'd just slip off to a long sleep and never wake up again.

Nothing was wrong with that, was it?

The dog nuzzled his hand, begging him to pat his head. He did.

No, he couldn't do it now. He just couldn't. He'd wait two or three days and see if anyone would come for him, and if no one did, then he'd put him to sleep. There was no other way out. He'd need every penny he could save to pay for Gerta's hospital bill.

Mr. McFarley got up and, trying to forget the pain in his back, closed the shop.

* * * * *

The boy skipped down the side walk.

"Ah's coming fo' you, Danny," he sang. "Ah's got the money and ah's

coming to take you home." He threw back his head as he skipped, looking at the clouds.

"Watch where you're going, boy!" a man snapped.

Little Jake walked more slowly. He could see the sign now—"McFarley's Pet Shop."

He held the match box tight in his hand. \$6.82 exactly—and he'd had enough to buy a quarter's worth of meat for Old Dan. Wouldn't he be surprised when he came in the shop with the \$6.82 and a bone for him.

"Come on, Danny, let's go *home*," he'd say, and Mr. McFarley would unlock the cage after taking the \$6.82.

Miss Lucy had only paid him sixty cents today, but He'd gone down by Miller's Meat Market, and had tap danced on the sidewalk for the white folks around there. They'd given him a pocket full of nickels and pennies.

He walked faster, his heart beating. When he reached the shop, he pressed his brown nose up against the window. He couldn't see to the back though, because Mr. McFarley was in the way.

Little Jake opened the door and walked up to Mr. McFarley.

"Ah's got it all here, Mister. \$6.82 lak you tole me. Ah's come for him."

"Who, boy?"

"Dan, Mister."

"That *old* dog?"

"Yas sir, ah . . ." and with a grin on his face, Little Jake turned around toward the last kennel.

"Danny, ah's . . ." Jake stopped. *The kennel was empty.* Jake's eyes widened and he cried: "Ya sold him!"

Mr. McFarley came over to the boy.

"Mister, he's gone! *Ya sold him!*"

"No, boy, I didn't sell him."

"Then where is he? Ah come fer him. Ah got the \$6.82 whut you said."

Mr. McFarley stood still, his face twisted.

"Mister, . . . Mister. Where's Danny! Ah got th' money, honest ah has!" The boy's voice was high.

"*Why didn't you come for him sooner, boy?*" Mr. McFarley said, his face still twisted.

"Ah's here now, Mister. Ah come soon's ah could . . . Where's Danny, Mister?"

"He's dead, boy."

Little Jake looked at the empty kennel—at the worn pillow that was still on the floor. Then trying hard to keep Mr. McFarley from hearing the funny noises his throat was making, he turned and walked slowly out of the shop.

BIRTHDAY GIRL

By ELAINE WOOD

Scene I

SETTING: *The curtain rises, Mr. and Mrs. Wade are at the door up stage right, receiving the thanks of young guests who are leaving. Patricia stands a little behind them.*

BETTY: We certain did enjoy the party, Mrs. Wade.

JOE: Thanks a lot. Good-night.

MR. AND MRS. WADE: Good-night. We've enjoyed having you. Come back again sometime soon.

CROWD: Thanks . . . good-night. (*Exeunt*).

(*Mr. and Mrs. Wade walk over to couch up stage center and sit.*)

MRS. WADE: Well, Patricia, you just gave a very successful party!

MR. WADE: Almost all the youngsters were quite well behaved.

MRS. WADE: They really were! . . . I'm glad you've started going around with a higher-class group.

(*Patricia stands away from her parents up stage left so that they are not looking at her. She shrugs her shoulders ironically at her mother's statement.*)

MR. WADE: They certainly are an improvement over that bunch of ruffians you invited to your birthday party last year. I've never seen such carryings-on in my life! Children! Fourteen and fifteen years old bringing whiskey to *our* house to *our* party! The very idea! If ever any of our friends found that out . . . I think I'd actually die!

MRS. WADE: Now, Tom, don't get upset over that again. That was a year ago and it's all over.

MR. WADE: It's over, but I'll never forget the humiliation of it all.

MRS. WADE: You know, the boys and girls tonight didn't even smoke!

I'm proud of you, Patricia. You've picked out some fine friends.

PATRICIA: (*Sarcastically*) I'm certainly glad you approve.

MRS. WADE: (*Ignoring her*) I missed out on lots of fun when I was young . . . living way out in the country and all. But I certainly want to see that you enjoy yourself, and have plenty of friends and parties, and fun. I'm glad to know, though, that you've learned to enjoy the right kind of people.

MR. WADE: As upset as you were at the time, Patricia, I think you'll admit now that I was right when I chased away the boys from your party last year—those drunken hoodlums! It certainly looks much better to see you with a different set of young people.

MRS. WADE: Like that Mickey Shannon . . . he seems to be such a wonderful young man, Patricia. He's so nice and polite. I was glad to see you paying him some attention. I'd kind of like for you to start going with him.

PATRICIA: Do you think all people with lots of manners are so wonderful?

MR. WADE: Maybe not, but you can certainly know that anyone who isn't polite and mannerly hasn't been brought up to be what they should be. Take that Frankie Jordan, for example. Isn't that the name of the boy who was so drunk last year?

MRS. WADE: (*Nods "yes".*)

MR. WADE: Do you think you could even compare him with Mickey? If his family couldn't teach him to be polite, they certainly couldn't teach him to be moral and good. Mickey knows how to behave . . . he's a good boy.

PATRICIA: Think so, huh? . . . Hah! I think I'll go to bed.

MRS. WADE: I think you should get more sleep, dear. You don't look like you're feelin' too well. What's the matter?

PATRICIA: Nothing—just sleepy.

MR. WADE: Now that you mention it, Alice, she doesn't look so good. You've lost weight, haven't you?

MRS. WADE: She never eats at mealtime any more. . . But I guess she enjoys eatin' at the drug store with the young people.

PATRICIA: Well, good-night. (*She starts to leave.*)

MR. WADE: Patricia! Aren't you doing to kiss Daddy good-night?

PATRICIA: Aw, that's kinda corny at my age, don't you think?

MR. WADE: Corny?

MRS. WADE: Well, Tom, she *is* practically a grown girl, now. We forget that Patricia's no longer our *baby*.

MR. WADE: Regardless of how old she is, a young lady who's been brought up correctly will show natural affection for her parents. To say that it's corny to kiss her father is positively disgraceful. Patricia, why *can't* you conform to the traditions you've brought up to respect?

PATRICIA: Yes, Daddy. (*Exit.*)

MR. WADE: Well, did you see that that! Walked right out of here and *still* didn't kiss me! Something has to be done about our daughter!

MRS. WADE: She's probably still dreaming about her party. It was quite a big occasion for her, you know—her sixteenth birthday! You just can't expect a young girl to be perfect, Tom.

MR. WADE: Alice, how on earth can I be expected to make a proper young lady out of her, if you constantly tear down what I do! A minute ago, you were saying she's a grown girl. Now you say she's just a child. No wonder she doesn't respect her parents!

MRS. WADE: Tom, why can't you forget respect, and authority and traditions for a while? She'll just be young once and I want her to enjoy herself. I know what it means to be young and not able to have any fun. And I don't think she gets much fun out of your guarding her all the time.

MR. WADE: Well, if I didn't guard her, I don't know what would have become of her by now. Take these birthday parties as an example. Remember last year when I chased that Frankie Jordan away, and

Patricia cried all night? You said I was too being too strict, and I was ruining her youth. Well, you see the final outcome. Now she's running around with a much nicer group of young people. If I'd let you have your way, she'd probably be a drunkard by now!

MRS. WADE: Oh, Tom, you're just jumpin' to conclusions! I think she knows right from wrong, and she'll do right whether we hound her about it or not. There's no need to make her miserable when she's not the type to act wild and rough anyway.

(Telephone rings)

MRS. WADE: *(Rises)* I'll get it. Just sit still. *(Crosses to phone)* Hello? . . . Just a moment. *(Puts down receiver, walks over to Patricia's door, cracks it, and whispers)* Patricia, Patricia . . . Betty wants to talk to you. You asleep?

PATRICIA: *(Enters)* No, I'm not asleep! *(Picks up phone)* Hello? . . . What's up, Betty? *(Enthused)* No joke! Sounds like a real deal to me. Where's it gonna be? Be right over. Bye. *(Hangs up receiver)*

MR. WADE: You'll stay right here, Patricia. You know it's too late to be going out.

PATRICIA: Oh, don't be a square. I'm just going over to Betty's apartment to goof around tonight.

MRS. WADE: Betty . . . She's that very good-looking, older girl, isn't she?

PATRICIA: She's twenty.

MR. WADE: And you just sixteen! That doesn't look nice at all. Especially when she doesn't live with her family.

PATRICIA: Well, none of your friends'll see us tonight. We're gonna stay in her apartment. And I'll go straight on to school in the morning. I've gotta go change from these pajamas *(Exit.)*

MR. WADE: I'm not going to put up with this sort of thing much longer, Alice! I'm getting fed up with my own child's just ignoring my wishes—even my orders!

MRS. WADE: Well, I don't really see why you object to her spending the night at Betty's. You can drive her over to see that she gets there safely. They'll enjoy it . . . just the two of them. I know girls like to be alone—to talk over secrets and such.

MR. WADE: Alice, I've worked a long time to get my job here, and I want the people in this town to respect me. Just feature what the neighbors must think when they see our daughter leave the house a little before midnight to go across town to spend the night with a girl who lives alone!

MRS. WADE: Now, how on earth are the neighbors going to know where she's going? Besides, it's none of their business. It's her life—to live the way *she* wants to!

(Patricia enters with an overnight case.)

PATRICIA: Can I take the car, Daddy?

MR. WADE: You certainly cannot! I'll drive you over myself.

PATRICIA: Oh, don't be such a shmoe! I'm no baby—I can drive.

MR. WADE: Patricia, if you're going at all, you're going the way I say.

PATRICIA: O.K., O.K., let's go. (*Starts out front door.*)

MRS. WADE: Have fun, dear. I'll see you tomorrow afternoon.

(*Patricia and Mr. Wade exeunt.*)

Scene II

SETTING: As the curtain rises, Betty is seen opening the door of her apartment. There are three boys in the room with her, and jazz music is playing on a phonograph.

(*Patricia enters.*)

BETTY: Well! I'm glad you finally made it. What kept you?

PATRICIA: Aw, I had to lie my way out of the house. You just don't know how lucky you are not to have to put up with a square ole man like I've got.

MICKEY: Yeah, he did seem to be a pill tonight. But your ole lady seemed like a pretty nice ole kid.

PATRICIA: (*Roaring with laughter*) Yeah, she's O.K. And guess what? She thinks you're a "wonderful young man"! She was really bluffed by all your fancy manners!

(*All the young people laugh at this.*)

MICKEY: Do you think either one of them noticed that any of us were loaded?

PATRICIA: Heck, no! They thought you were the most (*mocking voice*) "refined young people" they'd seen since we got to this horrid burg!

ALBERT: People are such stupid fools.

PATRICIA: A profound statement, brother! Hey, where's the junk?

BETTY: Oh, we forgot about you. Al made a new connection this afternoon, so we've already fixed—with heroin. I'd forgotten that you still stick to reefers. Anybody got any marijuana?

MICKEY: Yeah. I've already got some made in my cigarette case. Here—have one, Patricia.

PATRICIA: Thangs, sug.

ALBERT: Say, what goes with Eddie? Don't tell me he's passed out!

BETTY: (*Laughing*) Looks like it. Ain't he a flip, though?

(*They all laugh uproarously, except Pat, who walks over to the chair where Eddie is sitting straight up, looking straight ahead.*)

PATRICIA: Can he see?

MICKEY: No, he can't see anything now.

PATRICIA: (*Kneels in front of Eddie and looks right into his eyes.*) Gosh, you look right into his eyes, and you don't see a thing. It's like looking right straight through a glass window, only there's nothing on the other side.

ALBERT: He's just in the way in here now. Let's put him in the dining room, Mickey.

MICKEY: O.K., you catch his feet.

(*Albert and Mickey exeunt, carrying Eddie.*)

BETTY: Say, listen to that jive! Let's turn it up and dance some when the guys get back. (*Walks over to the phonograph and turns it up.*)

PATRICIA: (*Laughing*) Man, what a sight!

(*Albert and Mickey re-enter.*)

BETTY: Wow, men, let's dance!

(*Mickey goes to Patricia, Albert goes to Betty, and they dance through a wild jazz, laughing and swaying insanely through the whole song.*)

BETTY: Man, oh, man, is that ever more solid stuff!

ALBERT: Great music! But it sure takes something out of you. Anybody else ready for a jolt?

MICKY: Al, you're readin' my mind! Where's the outfit?

ALBERT: It's in the kitchen. I'll go get it. (*Exit.*)

MICKY: Hey, kid, don't you want a jolt? We got plenty of junk tonight. Plenty for everybody.

PATRICIA: No, thanks, I don't wanta jolt.

BETTY: She's afraid she'll get hooked.

PATRICIA: No, I'm not. I could take a jolt and not get hooked. I can stop anything I want to—if I want to.

MICKY: (*Laughs*) That's just it—you wouldn't want to. It's too much fun to quit. Don't be a stupid square. These reeferers you keep smoking—why they're just children's substitutes for the real thing.

(*Albert enters with a spoon, a belt, some cotton, a medicine dropper and a box of matches.*)

ALBERT: O.K., Mickey, you want it in the main line?

MICKY (*Starts wrapping the belt around his arm.*) (*Laughs*) Of course, Al. Who do you think you'r kiddin'?

ALBERT: (*Reaches in his pocket and pulls out a capsule of heroin. He opens it and puts the heroin in the spoon, then lights a match and holds the match under the spoon. He puts in a little cotton and takes the dripper.*) Here goes! (*He punches the needle into Mickey's arm.*)

MICKY: (*Reaching into his pocket.*) Wow! I was really feeling down. Well, here's your dough.

ALBERT: Thanks, Mickey. Anybody else? How 'bout you, chicken?

PATRICIA: No, thanks—I'll stick to my cigarettes.

ALBERT: Just let me know when you change your mind. How about you, Betty?

BETTY: Tonight's just not the night. I don't get paid until tomorrow. Is my credit good?

ALBERT: I've got a better idea . . . why don't we just make a little deal?

BETTY: What sort of a deal?

ALBERT: I don't think you're really all that dumb, but if you want the details I'll give them to you.

BETTY: Shoot—I'm listenin'.

ALBERT: Oh, we wouldn't want to bore Patricia and Mickey with business matters. Why don't we discuss it in the other room?

BETTY: My! Aren't you the sly ole wolf!

ALBERT: I also have the junk—interested?

BETTY: (*Slight pause*) Natch, man! Let's talk it over! (*Betty and Albert go into the other room.*)

MICKEY: (*Laughs*) Oh, that Albert, he's a sport, isn't he?

PATRICIA: (*Sits with a shocked, hurt look on her face, silently.*)

MICKEY: Say, kid, what goes? What's eatin' ya, huh?

PATRICIA: (*Attempting to be gay*) Oh, nothing. I was just thinkin'.

MICKEY: Thinkin's no fun. Why don't you take a jolt?

PATRICIA: No, Mickey. I've already told you I don't want any H. I'd like to blow up a joint, though, if you have another reefer.

MICKEY: Sure—here you are—blow away!

PATRICIA: Thanks.

MICKEY: Here, I'll light it for you. (*He lights the marijuana cigarette, then slides his arm around her shoulder.*)

PATRICIA: Say, are you too weak to sit up or something?

MICKEY: (*Chuckles*) You're cute, did you know it?

PATRICIA: I don't think you have to get *that* close to see whether I am or not.

MICKEY: Say, now, you're not going to be really huffy, are you?

PATRICIA: I'm not being huffy. I just don't feel that affectionate that's all. (*She rises and walks toward the phonograph.*) Let's dance some more.

MICKEY: Forget the music. (*He walks toward her.*) We can do our routine without accompaniment.

PATRICIA: Can it, Mickey. I'm not interested.

MICKEY: Oh, but you were always interested when I had a can of tobacco, weren't you?

PATRICIA: All right, then how much do I owe you? I'll pay for every smoke you've ever given me.

MICKEY: I don't want your money. We can settle on a friendlier basis.

PATRICIA: How many joints, I asked?

MICKEY: Look, hon, I didn't sell you the joints—I gave them to you as a friend—a close friend. Now, can't you act the same toward me? (*A knock is heard at the door.*)

MICKEY: (*Whirling around to face the door.*) Who's that, Pat? Did you let anybody know?

PATRICIA: Only my parents, and I know they're in bed.

MICKEY: You're lying. That's the heat, and you're the one who squealed, aren't you?

(*Knock again.*)

PATRICIA: No, I swear I've been careful!

VOICE OFFSTAGE: Patricia! Patricia!

PATRICIA: (*Recognizing the voice*) Ohhhh!

MICKEY: Who is it? (*Shaking her arm.*) Who is it, Pat?

PATRICIA: I . . . I don't know.

MICKEY: You're lying. Who is it?

PATRICIA: You go in the dining-room and I'll get rid of him.

MICKEY: (*Thinks for a while*) O.K.—only this'd better not be a trick. You're in this is deep as we are, you know, and you've got your "father's reputation" to think of! (*He exits and leaves the door to the dining*

room slightly open.)

PATRICIA: *(Watches Mickey leave, then slowly walks to the door.)*

PATRICIA: Who is it?

FRANKIE: Patricia, honey, let me in—it's Frank!

PATRICIA: *(Opens the door)* How did you find me? Who told you?

FRANKIE: *(Enters)* Oh, baby, it's good to see you! I called your house and asked for you. Your mother didn't recognize my voice, I guess, or she'd never have told me how to find you.

PATRICIA: Where've you been all this time since you left our house?

FRANKIE: That's a tactful way to put it—"Since you left our house". You mean, since your father kicked me out?

PATRICIA: Well, it's not my fault—I tried.

FRANKIE: I know it, honey. But I couldn't take it. I went home and packed, and then decided where to go. I joined the Navy and that's where I've been all this year. I got to thinking about your birthday—and you—and I couldn't take it any longer. So here I am.

PATRICIA: *(Quite formally)* It's nice to see you again.

FRANKIE: I've seen you all along, Patricia. I guess that's why I'm back here tonight. You've been in my mind constantly, Pat.

(Patricia just stares in front of her.)

FRANKIE: *(Embarrassed at her reception.)* Where's your friend, the girl you're spending the night with?

PATRICIA: *(Frightened, she stiffens up.)* Oh-uh-she's in the bedroom. She reads lots. She's reading.

FRANKIE: *(Gets up to walk around the room.)* This is a nice apartment for a young lady to keep up herself. I don't see . . . *(picks up the spoon.)* Say, what's all this apparatus?

PATRICIA: It's Betty's! She has to use it . . . I mean, she had to give herself injections of medicine. You see, she has some sort of glandular ailment.

FRANKIE: Oh, I see.

PATRICIA: *(Not satisfied with her explanation)* Yes, that's the way she takes her medicine.

FRANKIE: *(Chuckling)* People take medicine in funny ways, don't they? Remember how I used to "take my medicine"?

PATRICIA: Sure. You took just a little too much the night Daddy kicked you out, didn't you?

FRANKIE: *(Suddenly serious)* Yeah, but I've done it again.

PATRICIA: What do you mean?

FRANKIE: Just that I stopped drinking—that's all.

PATRICIA: Ha! Who do you think you're kiddin'?

FRANKIE: I'm not kidding. I loved you, and I loved to drink. It was a matter of deciding which one I loved best—and I've had plenty of time to decide.

PATRICIA: Tell me when it's time to laugh.

FRANKIE: Patricia, to me it's no laughing matter? Why on earth do you take it so lightly? Why won't you believe me?

PATRICIA: Because I know you couldn't stop drinking if you really wanted to. You're hooked, and you know it.

FRANKIE: If you've got the guts to do it, you can quit anything, Patricia—anything.

PATRICIA: (*Thinks a while*) Think so, do you?

FRANKIE: I know. I've tried it.

PATRICIA: What if you don't have the guts?

FRANKIE: I guess that was the wrong word to use in the first place. I didn't really mean guts. I meant something better to live for. I decided it would be much better to work for, and try for you, instead of booze.

PATRICIA: And what happens when you find something better than me?

FRANKIE: You don't usually find something you never hunt for, Patricia.

PATRICIA: You don't *always* find what you do hunt for either.

FRANKIE: If you hunt long enough you do. I'd hunted as long as I can remember for—something, I didn't know what. I thought I'd found it in booze, but when I was forced to leave you because of that—then I *knew* what "it" was. It was love, Patricia—and it's worth everything else in the world!

PATRICIA: Do you really believe that?

FRANKIE: (*Looks her straight in the eyes a long time, then slowly moves toward her. He lifts her chin and kisses her softly, meaningfully, for a long time.*)

PATRICIA: (*Her head dropped*) Frankie . . .

FRANKIE: What is it, honey?

PATRICIA: How do you know when you're in love?

FRANKIE: I don't know. I guess it's when you find somebody you'd rather please, and be with, than to have anything and everything else. I don't know how you know it.

PATRICIA: I do (*She looks up at him, and he understands. They embrace*) Take me home, Frankie.

FRANKIE: Take you home! What's the matter, Pat?

PATRICIA: I . . . forgot to kiss my daddy good-night.

FRANKIE: You what? (*Laughs*) Oh, well, I guess I'll figure you out sometime in our life-time. That your over-night bag?

PATRICIA: (*Nods*) Yeah. . . .

FRANKIE: (*Picks up the bag and starts to the door*) Well, let's say good-night to your friend and be gone, birthday-girl.

PATRICIA: Oh-uh-she's kind of peculiar, Frankie. I think she'd just as soon I didn't disturb her reading. She'll know I've gone home. I'll call her in the morning.

FRANKIE: O.K. Let's go (*Goes into the hall with his back turned.*)

PATRICIA: (*Looks toward the dining-room*) Right with you, Frankie. (*Mickey's head appears from the dining-room door. Patricia stands at the door and looks at him. Dazedly, wistfully, he makes a lazy salute to her, and she goes out.*)

THE MANSION

JEAN THRASHER

*As dusk softened with misty dulling blue
The red sod and cool green oaks,
The marble columns of the mansion
Rose in blue-white stateliness above the sloping lawn.
Four dark chimneys like boughless trees
Pierced the black layer of clouds.
Wisteria groped with purple hands up the doric columns
And swayed dizzily in the breeze.
Light strains of a waltz played on a muted violin
Drifted through the palely lit windows
And out into the coolness of the dew.
A face appeared at the arched window—
A girl's face flushed with dancing.
Her gray eyes and red mouth mocked
The encompassing blackness
That begged admittance to this citadel of the past.
She turning her bronze curls bobbing to the cadence of the dance.
The shadowy masses of the trees stirred restlessly.
Silver threads of rain streaked the window pane
And blurred the whirling figures within.
The trees surged in helpless frenzy
As large drops filled the air,
Mixing with the dusk to spread a black veil over the mansion.
The sky cracked in an orange jagged chasm
Lighting the silent columns with the brightness.
A burnished glow shone through the windows,
And flames like autumn leaves seethed on the roof.
The fire rushed through the structure
Revealing it still grand yet empty—
A columned temple to some omnipotent divinity of destruction.
Slowly the flames died into luminously glowing embers.
Another flash of lightning disclosed the mansion,
A heap of blackened rubble.
Alone amidst the desolation
Four brick chimneys and six sooty columns stood upright.
The caressing fingers of the wind
Stirred the singed leaves of the wisteria,
As a fragment of memory melody whispered in the smouldering ruins—
Dixie.*

